

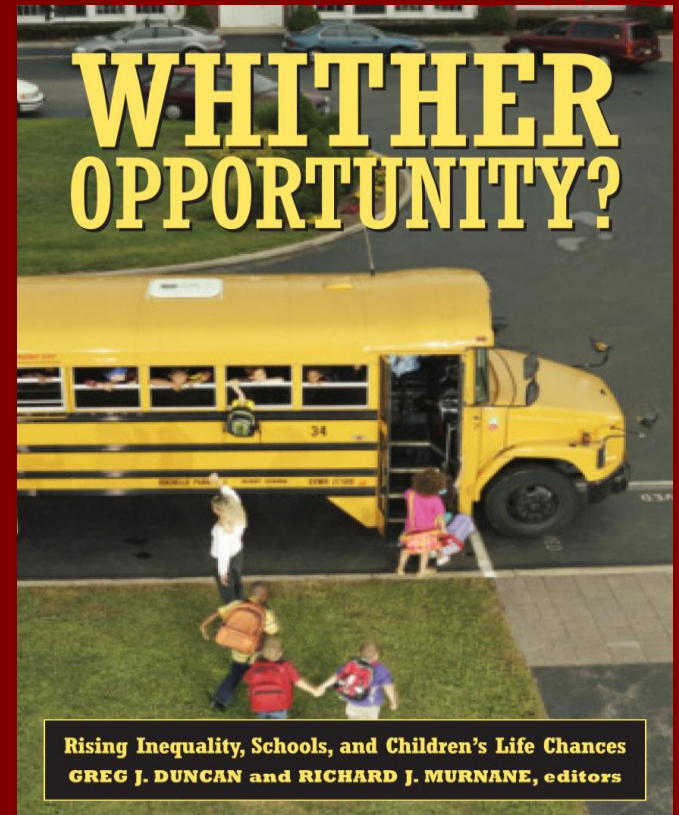
Rising Inequality, Schools, and Children's Life Chances

Richard J. Murnane

December 10, 2013

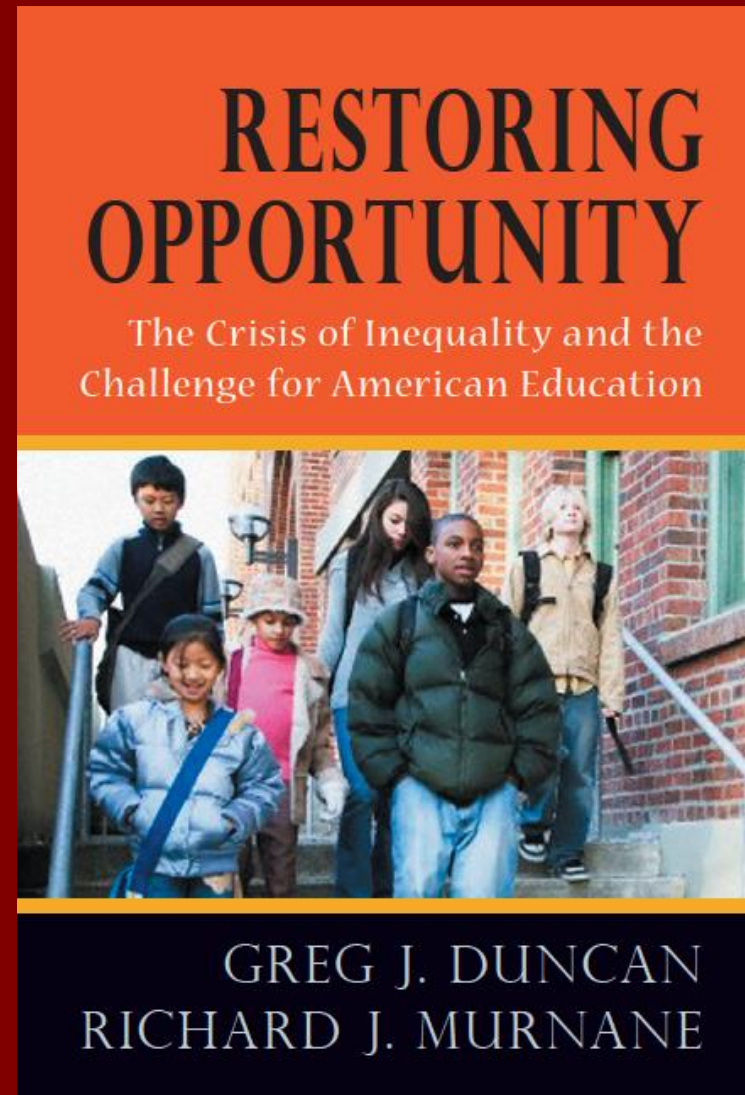
Project History

- Six-year project co-directed by Greg Duncan examining how increased family income inequality in the U.S. affects quality of education provided to children from low-income families.
- First product: 2011 edited volume

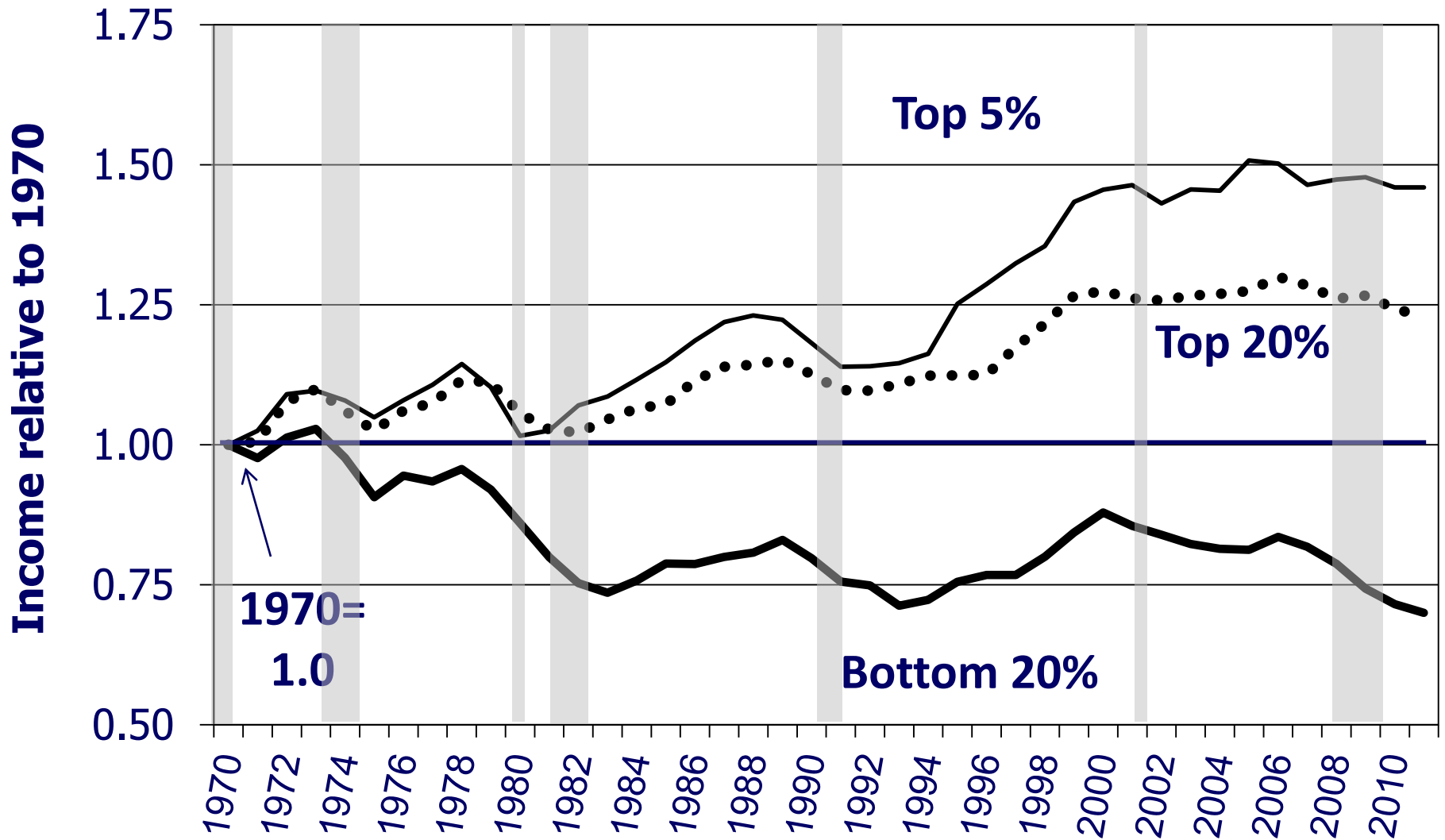


Second Product of Project

- Aimed at broad audience
- Second half of book describes interventions that have improved schooling outcomes for low-income children and adolescents.
- Book and videos of effective interventions available January 2014

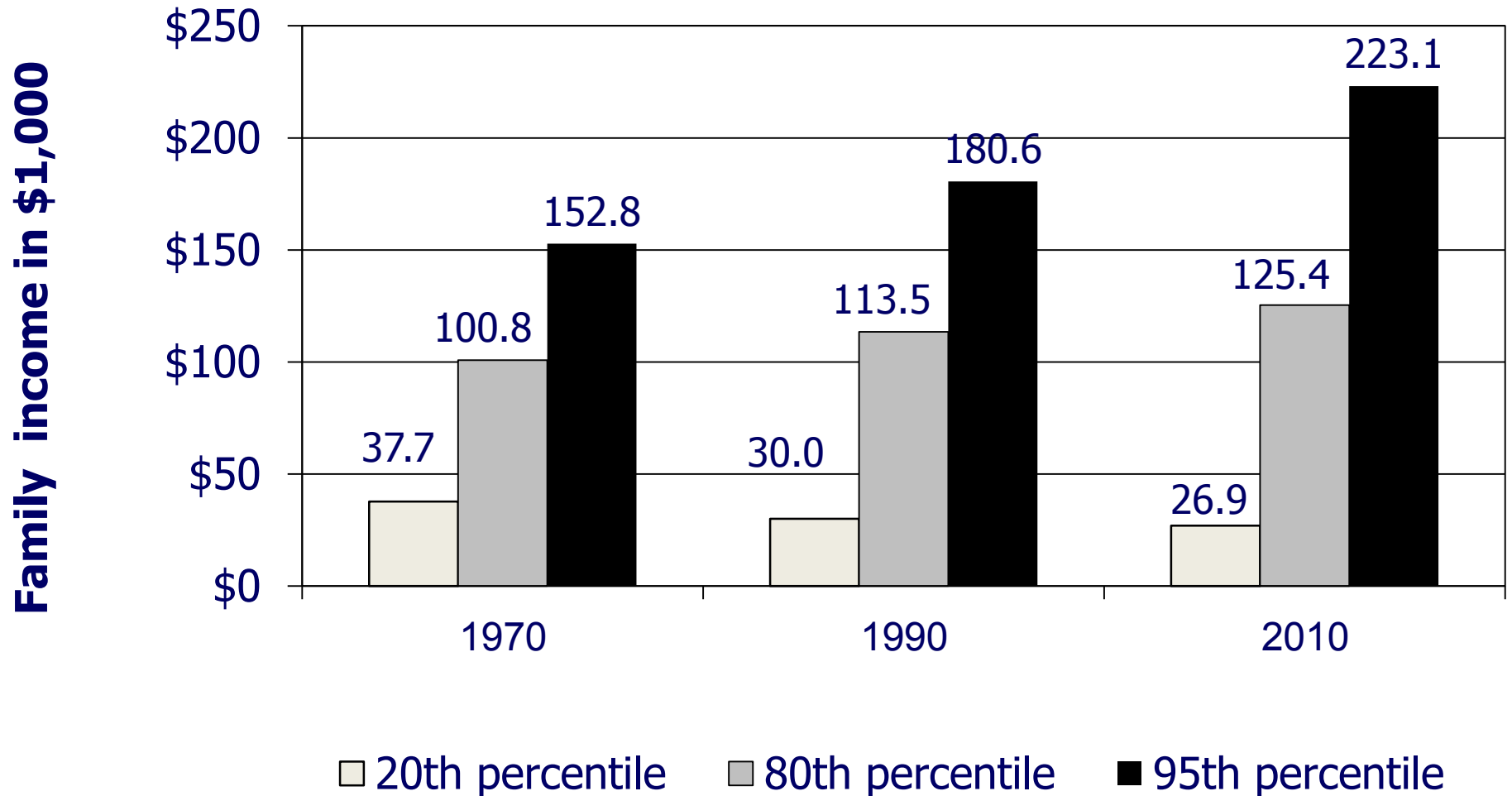


Children's family income, relative to 1970



Note: Data are for the family incomes of all children age 5-17. They based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Shaded areas indicate recession years.

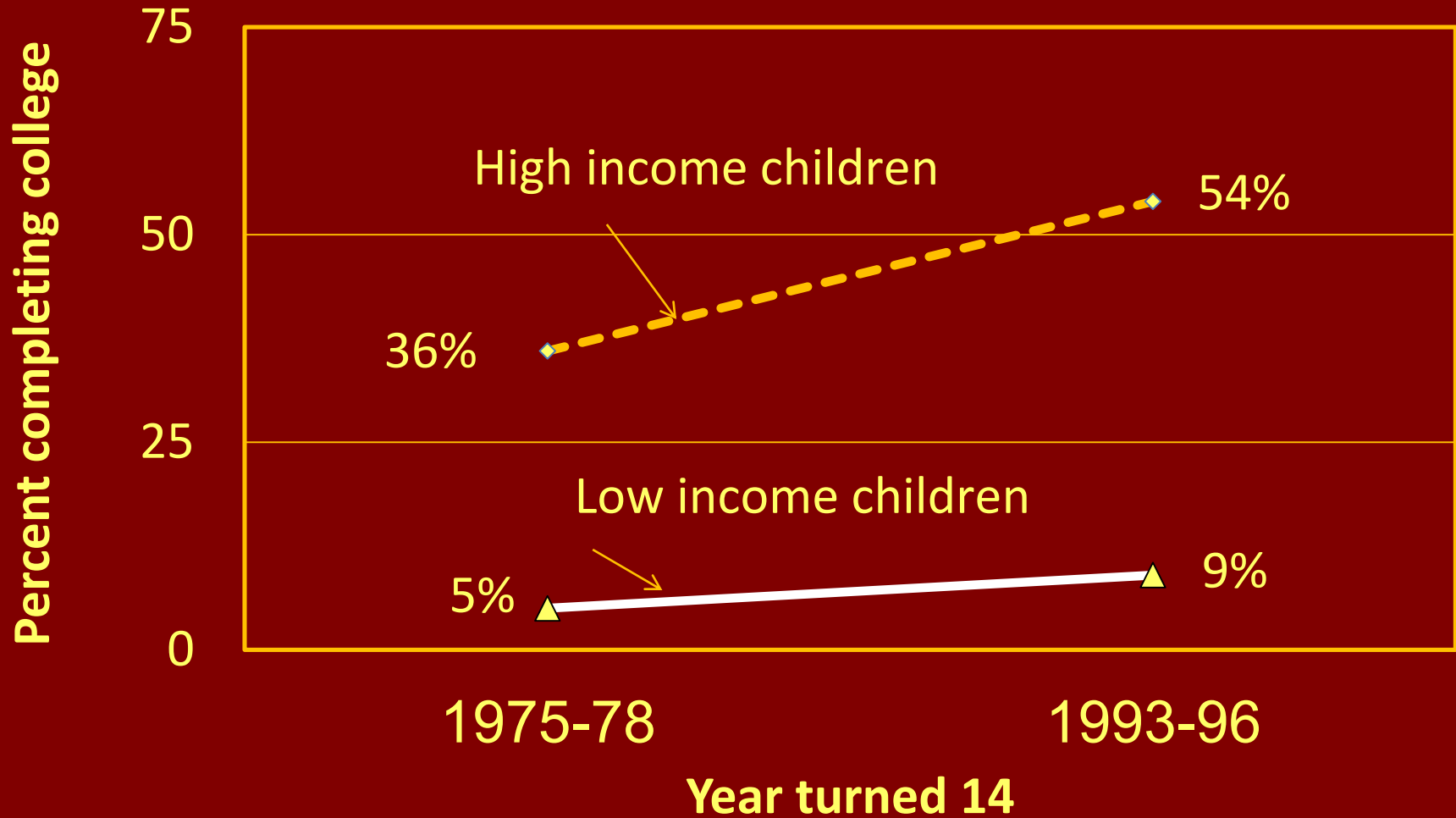
Children's family income over time



Note: Chart shows 20th, 80th and 95th percentiles of the distribution of family incomes for all children age 5-17. They are based on data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census and are adjusted for inflation. Amounts are in 2012\$. Reprinted with permission from *Whither Opportunity?* 2011 © Russell Sage Foundation.

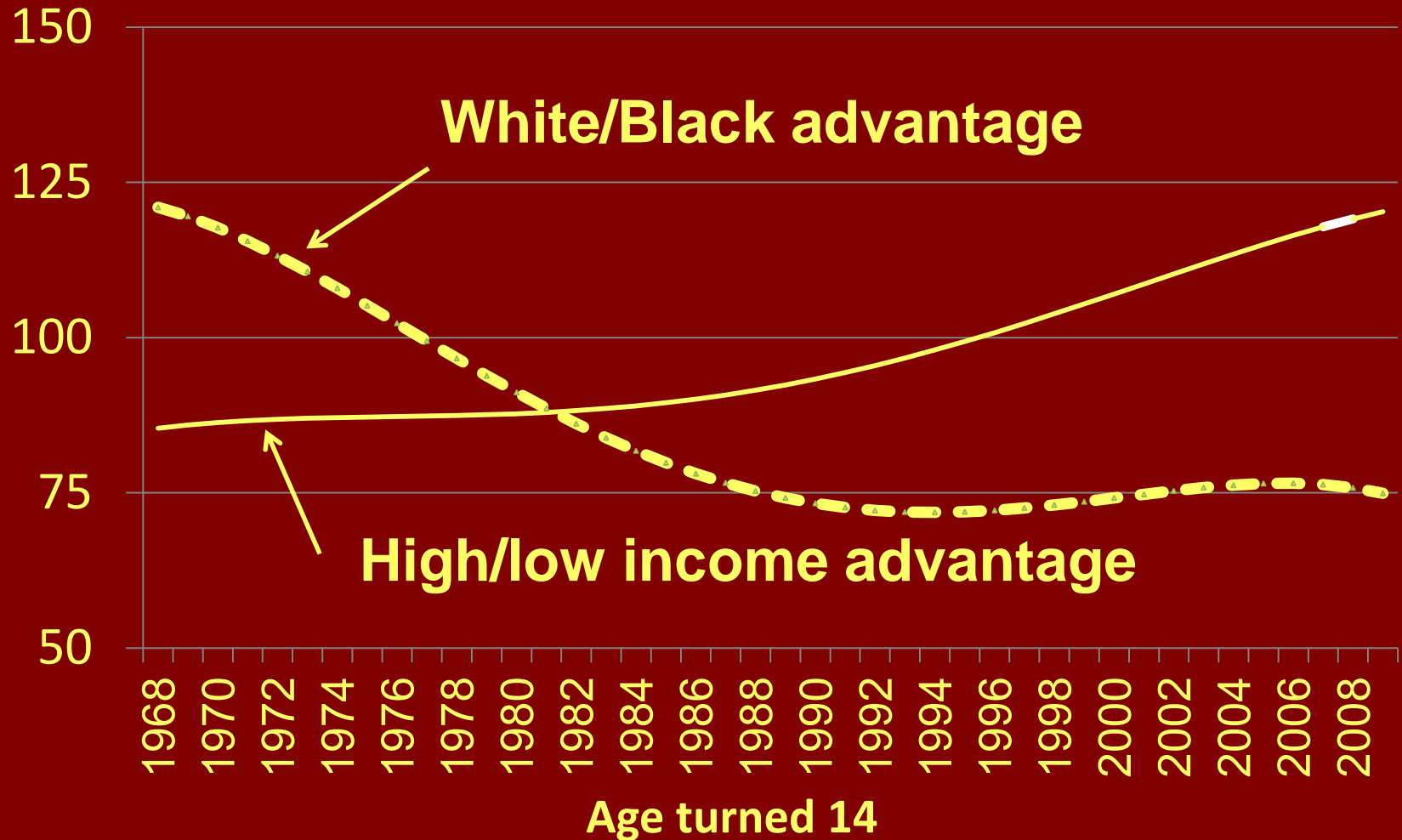
Children's achievement and attainment

College graduation rates for high and low income children



Bailey and Dynarski (2011), using data from 1979 and 1997 cohorts of the National Longitudinal Surveys of Youth (NLSY)

Race- and income-based gaps in reading achievement in SAT-type units

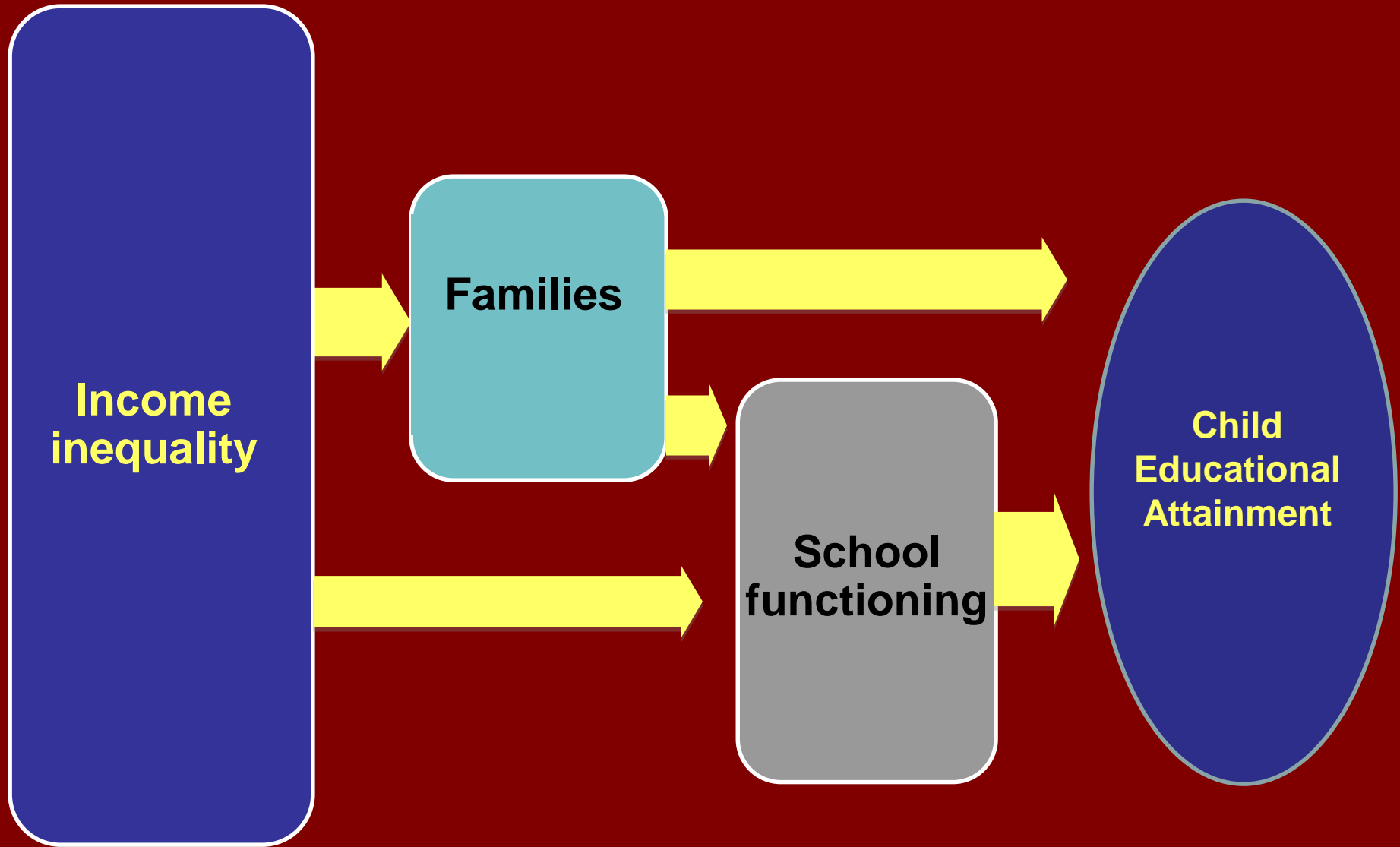


Reardon (2011), using 14 different data sources; see online appendix to his paper for details.

Income inequality and children's
attainment:

Are there ANY causal linkages?

Inequality and Children's Attainments



Family income story

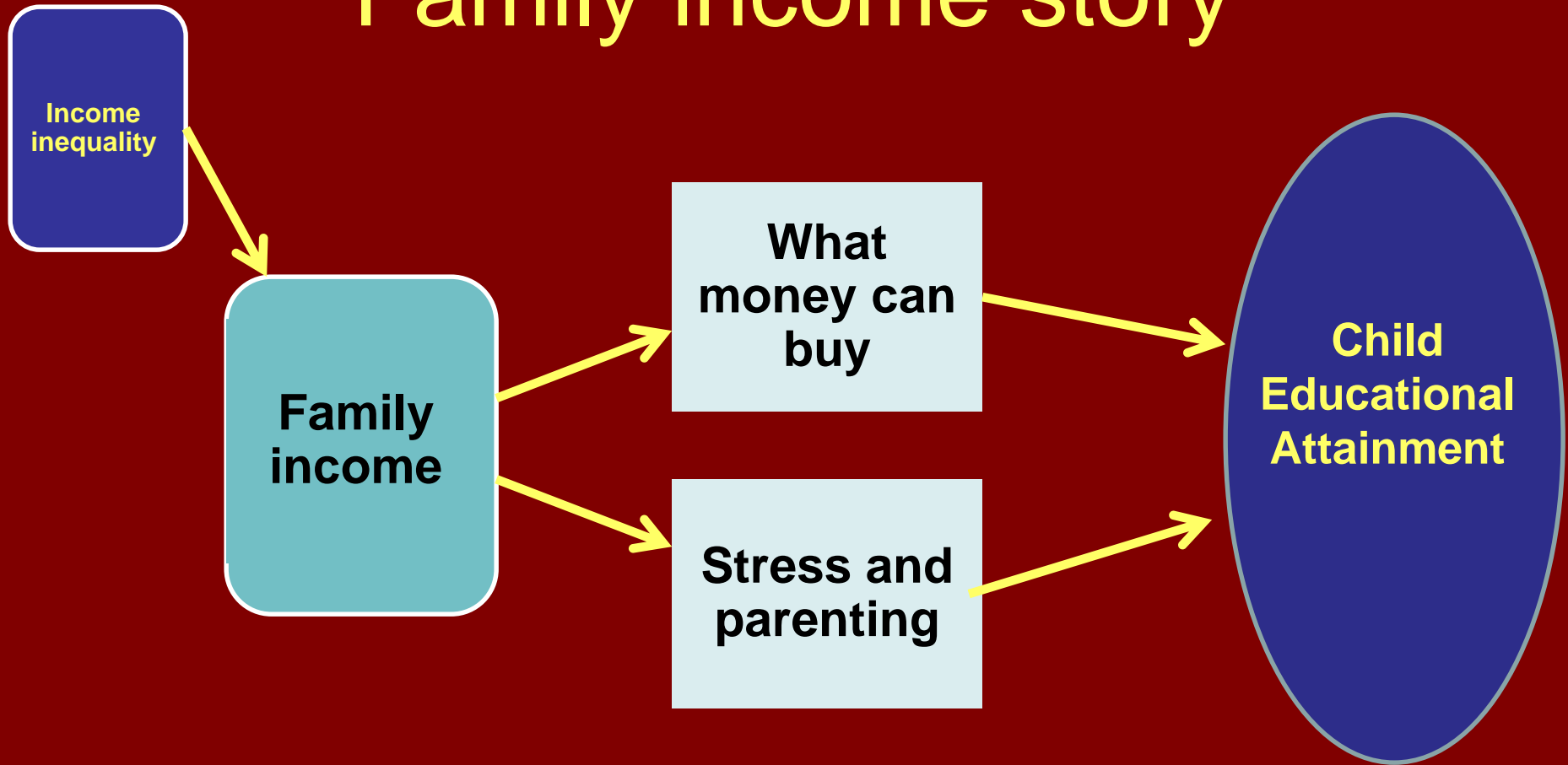
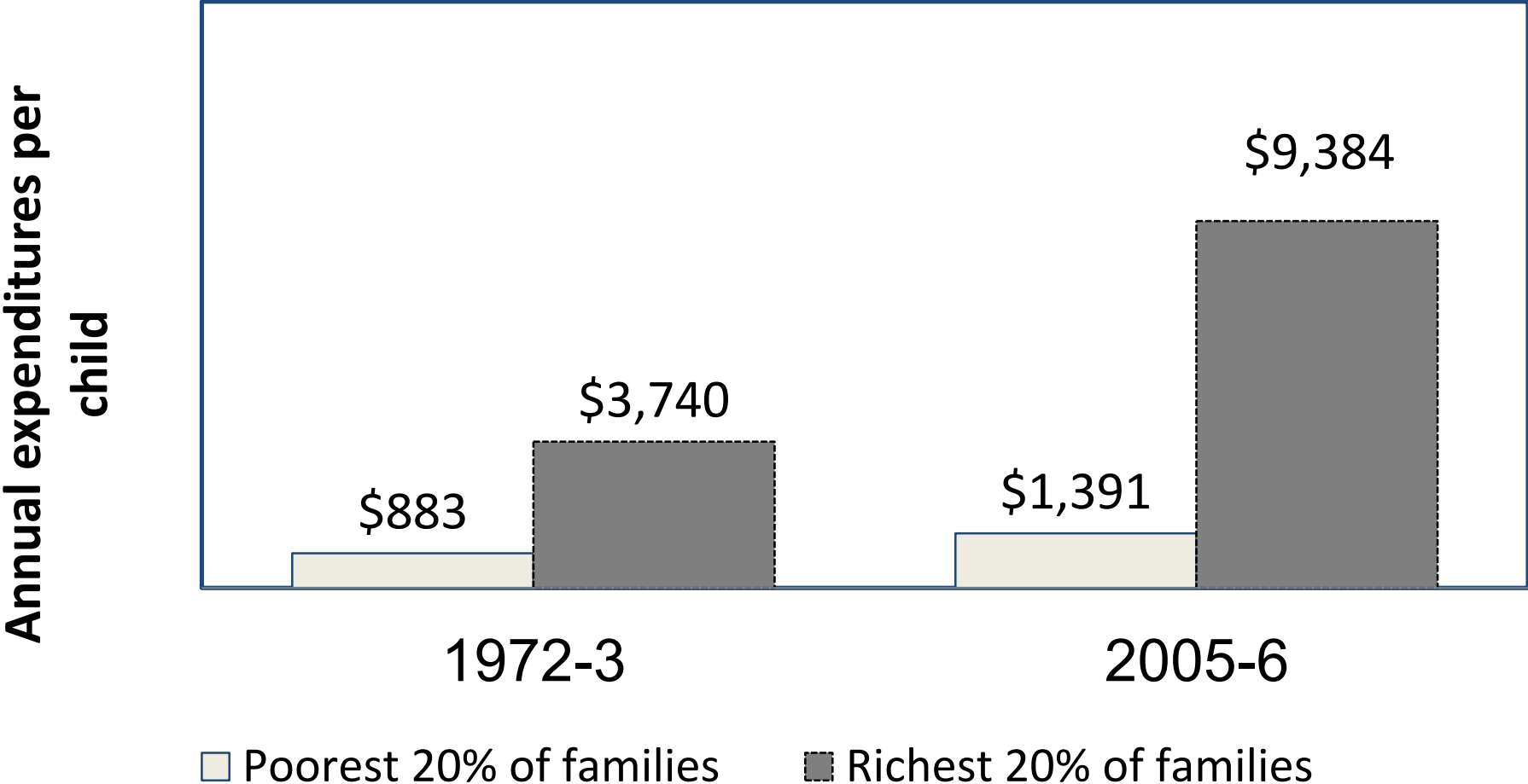
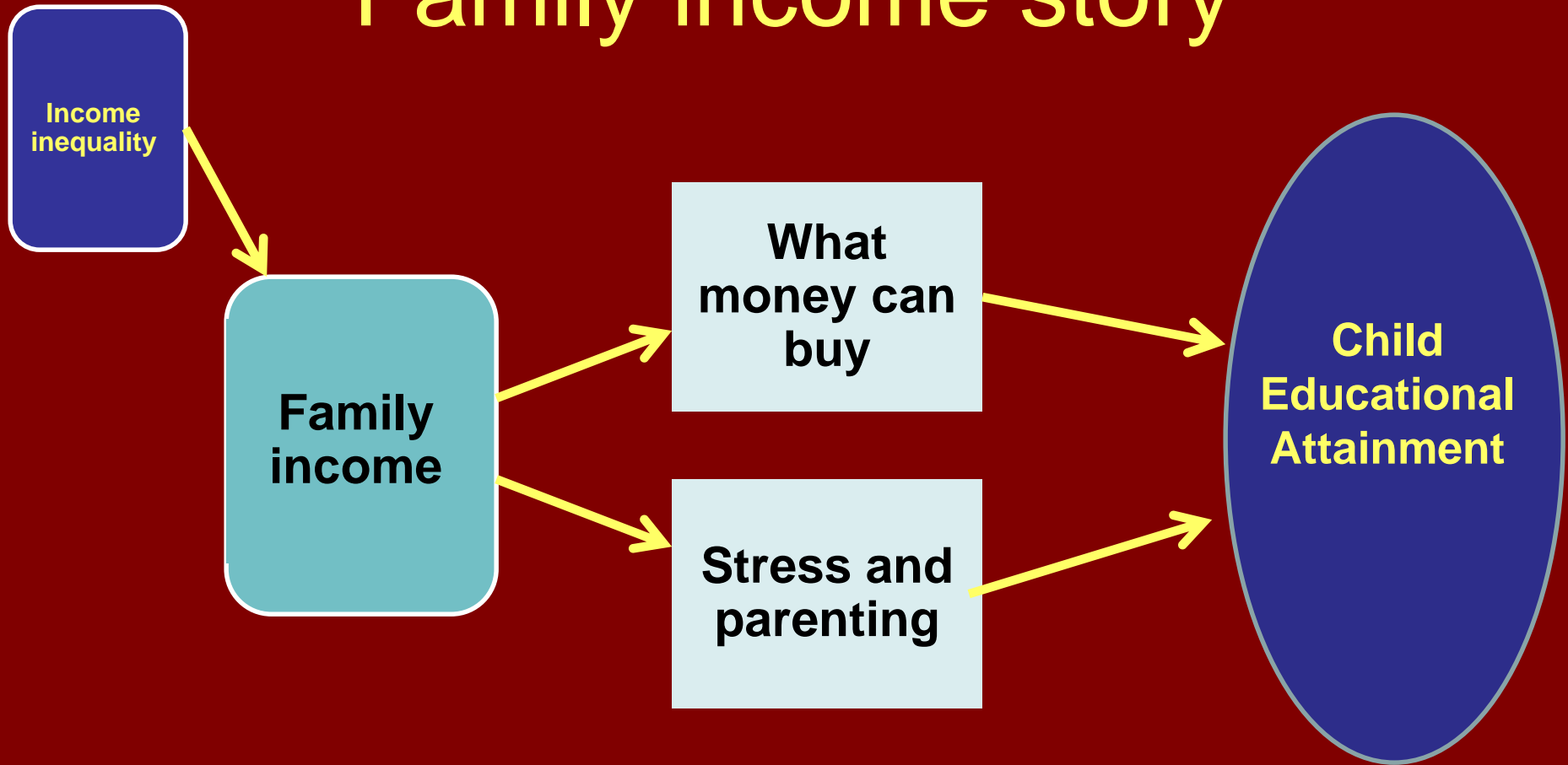


Figure 4: Family enrichment expenditures on children



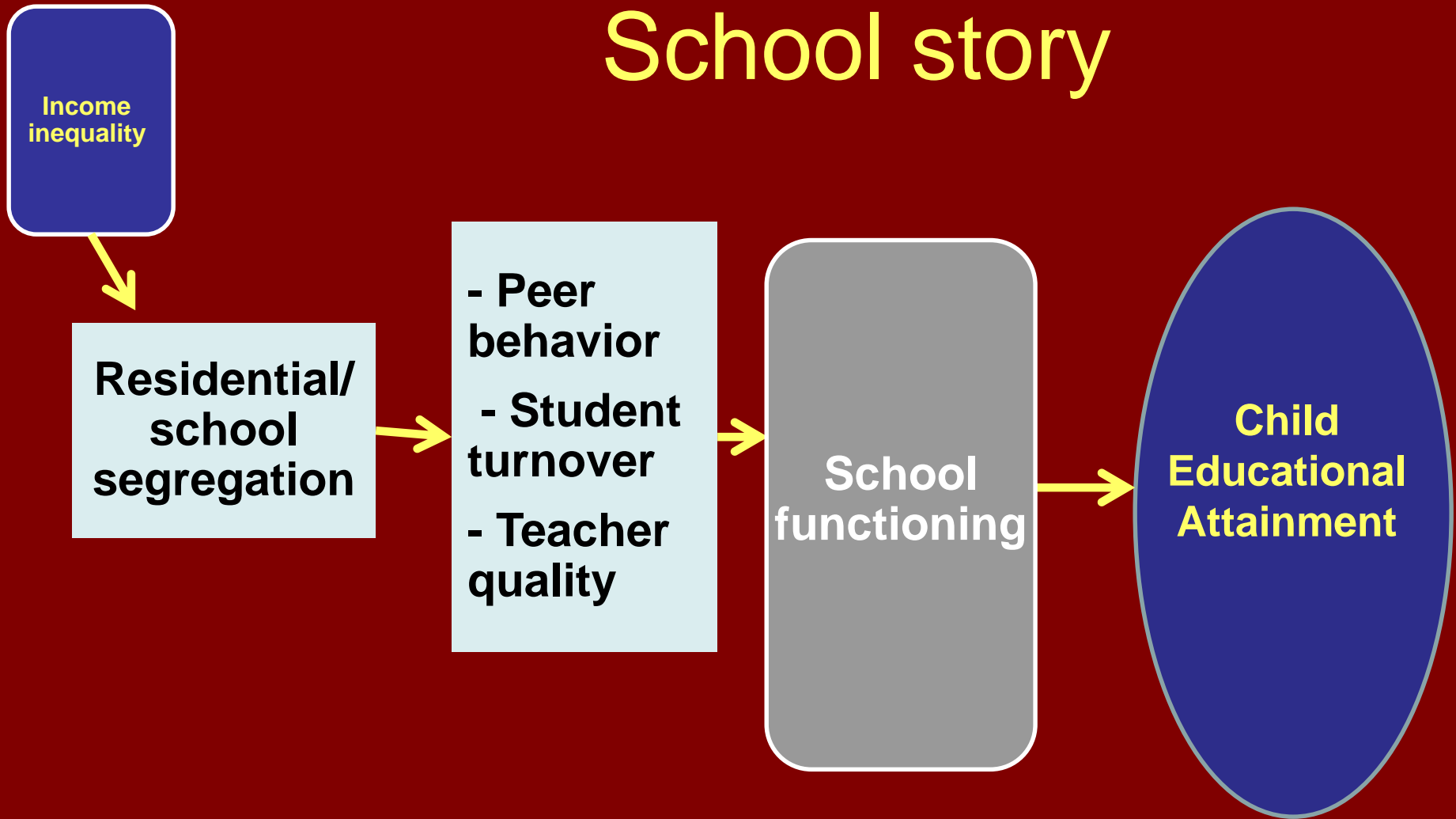
Authors' calculations based on data from the Consumer Expenditure Surveys. Amounts are in 2012\$. Reprinted with permission from *Whither Opportunity?* 2011 © Russell Sage Foundation.

Family income story

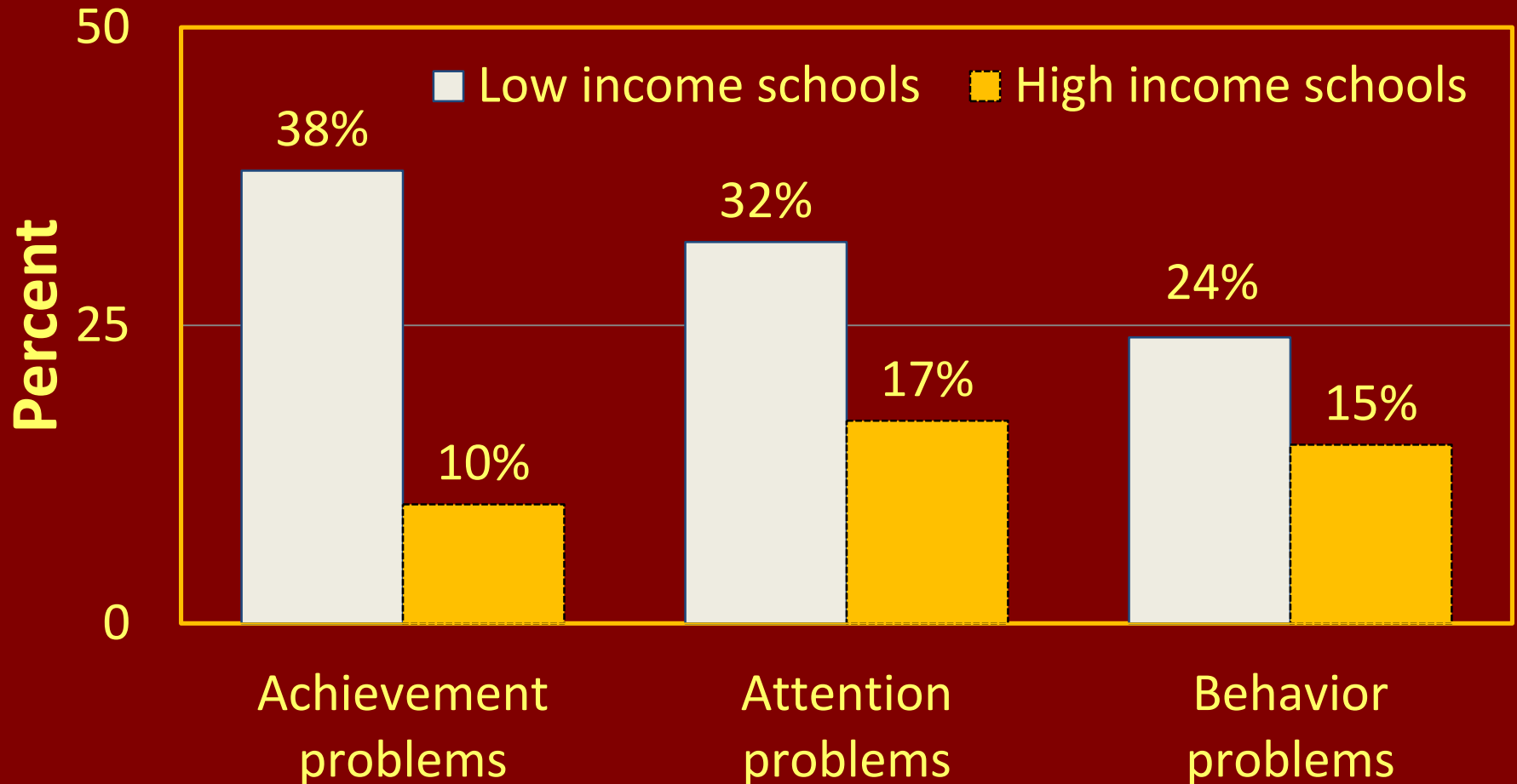


School story

School story

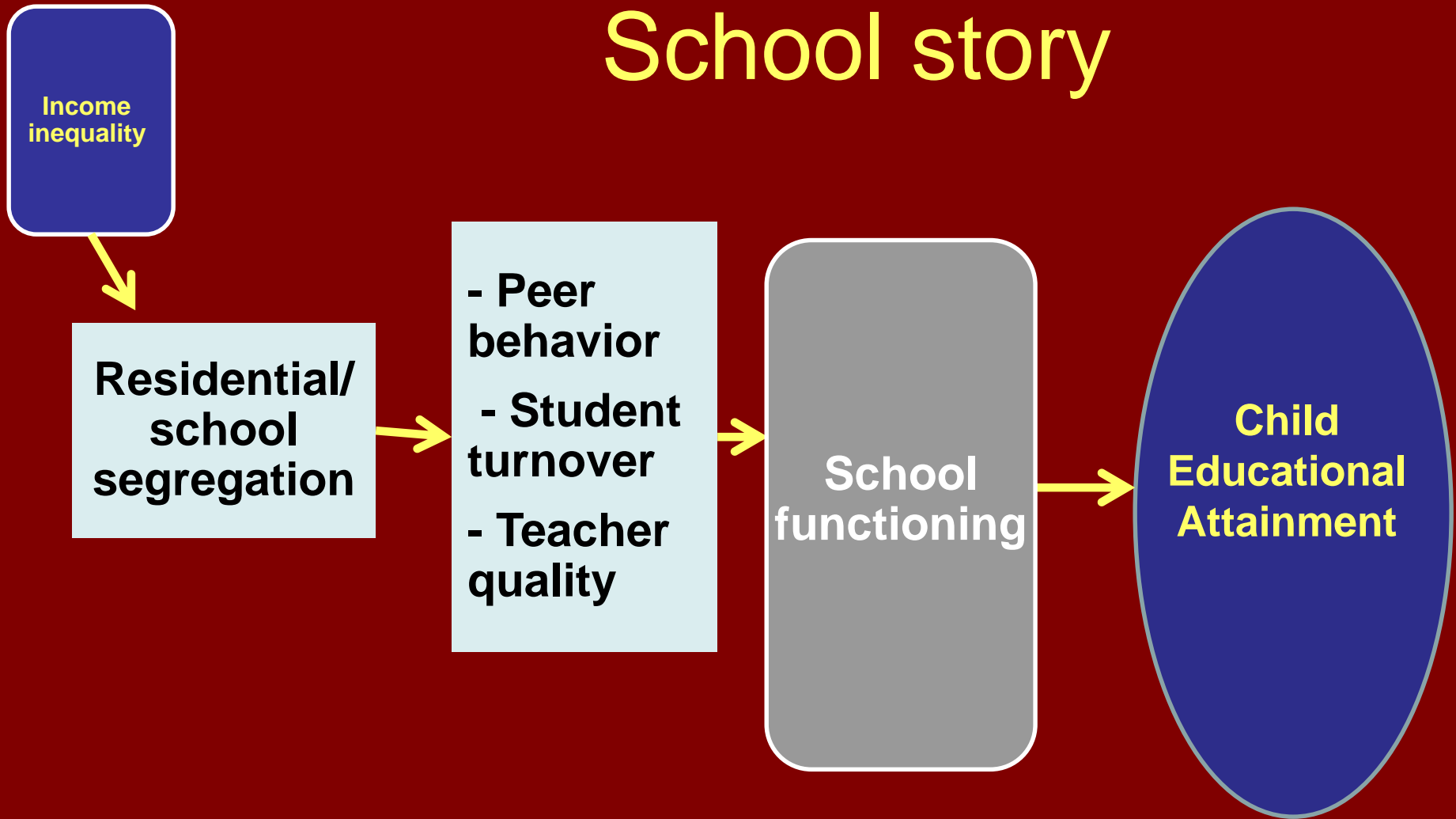


Peers with problems in low and high income elementary schools



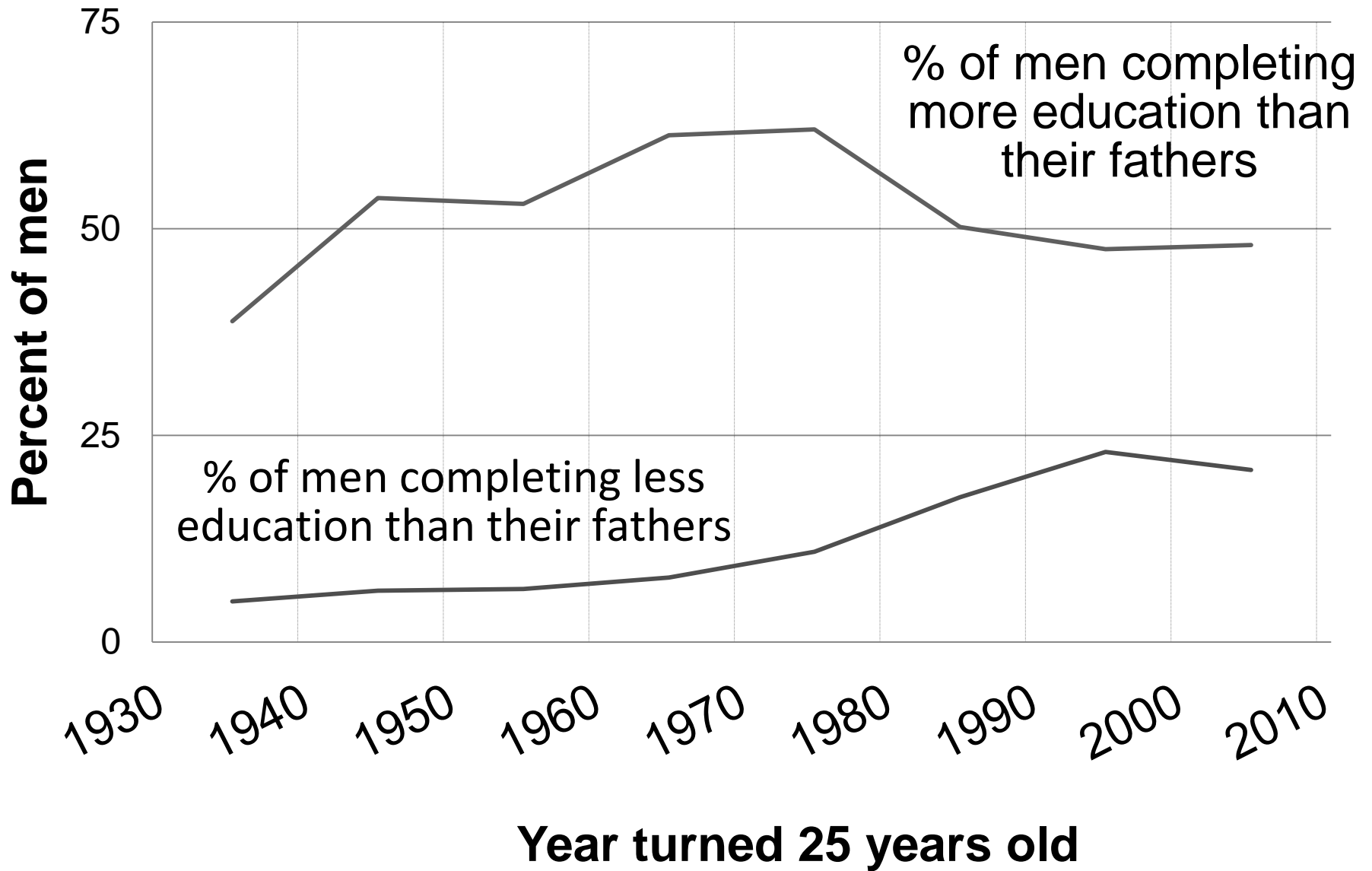
Duncan and Magnuson (2011), using data from the Kindergarten cohort of the Early childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K)

School story



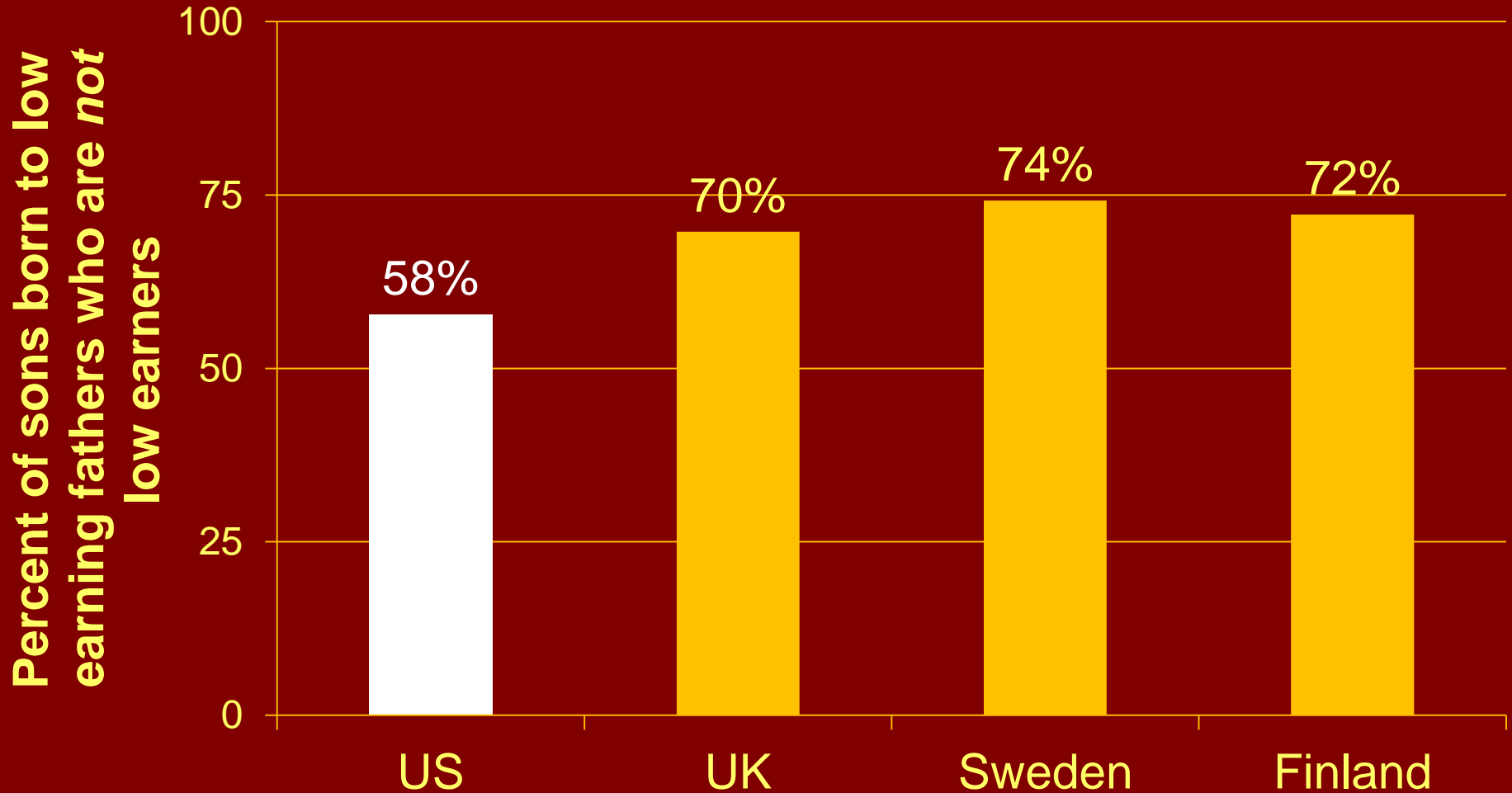
Intergenerational story

Figure 2.5: Men's intergenerational mobility



Source: Hout and Janus (2011), using data from the General Social Surveys.

Upward mobility in the earnings of sons in the United States and other countries



Source: Jantti et al. (2008)

Improving Life Chances for Children growing up in Low-Income Families

- Although income inequality may be the root cause, reducing it may not be the most cost-effective policy for boosting school success
- Reducing residential- and school-segregation by income is difficult.
- Attack the problem on three fronts
 - Economic support programs (EITC, New Hope)
 - Effective pre-K programs
 - Effective school reform

Better supports for low-income families

- Positive impact on young children's development from:
 - EITC
 - New Hope and the Minnesota Family Investment Program
- Especially important because of externalities (peer group effects)

Common Elements of Successful School-based Initiatives

1. Developed a coherent systemic improvement plan and stuck with it.
2. Strong school supports
3. Sensible accountability

Why Not Good Schools for All Children?

- Local control
- Increasing income-based segregation of schools
- Short tenure of urban school superintendents
- Increasing skill demands

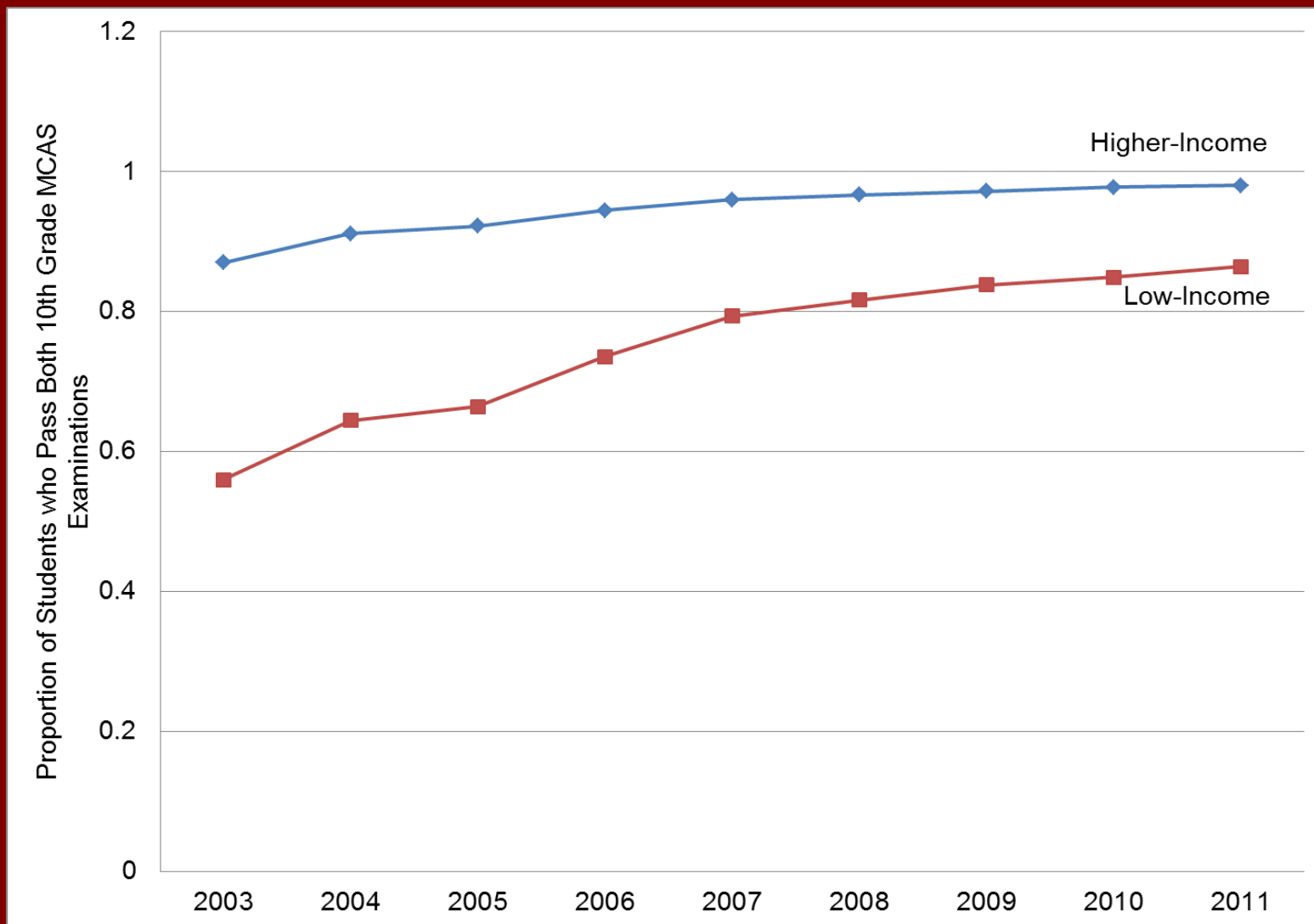
Building Blocks

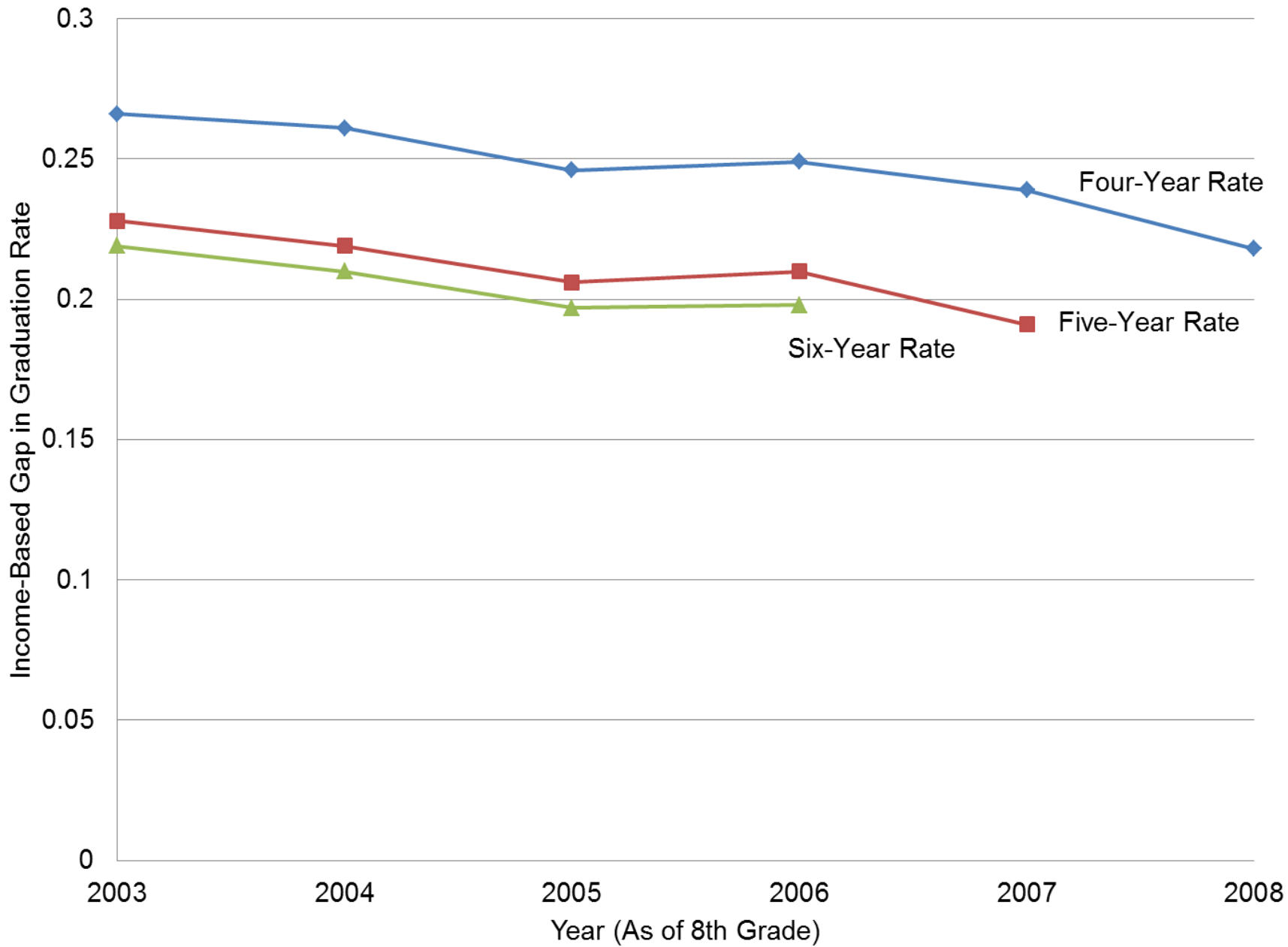
- Existence Proofs
- Common Core State Standards
- Supports and Support Organizations
- Evolving Accountability
- Advances in Knowledge
 - Child and adolescent development
 - Acquisition of literacy skills
 - Effective Professional Development

Encouraging Evidence from Massachusetts

- Adopted Comprehensive School Reform Legislation in 1993
- Has stuck with same strategy for 20 years
- Encouraging evidence on:
 - Trends in average achievement
 - Reduction in SES-based gaps in achievement

Probability of passing the first attempt on both the 10th grade MCAS examinations in mathematics and English Language Arts, for low-income and higher-income students, over time





Major Challenge

- Increasing socio-economic mobility – the glue that holds the U.S. democracy together.
- A Necessary condition: Developing systems of strong school supports before ratcheting up accountability
- Initial test of progress: high poverty schools are increasingly able to attract and retained skilled teachers.

Thank you

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